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AGO ltr 29 Apr 1980

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

HQDA Ltr 525-73-17

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

Expires 20 June 1974

DAAG-PAP-A (M) (4 Jun 73) DAMO-ODU

20 June 1973

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, USASTRATCOM
Signal Support Agency Long Binh, Period Ending 30 April 1971

AD911169

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. The attached report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with para 4b, AR 525-15.
2. The information contained in this report is provided to insure that lessons learned during current operations are used to the benefit of future operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material, as appropriate. This report should not be interpreted as the official view of the Department of the Army, or of any agency of the Department of the Army.
3. Information of actions initiated as a result of your evaluation should be forwarded to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, ATTN: DAMO-ODU, within 90 days of receipt of this letter.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Verne L. Bowers
VERNE L. BOWERS
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

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Operational Report - Lessons Learned, USASTRATCOM
Signal Support Agency Long Binh, Period Ending 30
April 1971, RCS CSFOR-65R-3)

2. Lessons Learned: Commanders Observations, Evaluations and Recommendations

a. Personnel:

(1) Personnel Shortages by MOS:

(a) Observations: Continual shortages in certain skill fields are affecting this unit's mission performance.

(b) Evaluation: Continual shortages in certain key MOS's continue to hamper the mission effectiveness of this Agency. In particular, individuals possessing an Additional Skill Identifier (ASI) have posed problems. Personnel planning made on a "bread brush" scale using personnel totals rather than MOS and skill levels does little to alleviate shortages in areas where authorizations are small and spaces must be filled with highly qualified technicians. "Body count" planning will not alleviate these problems. The following MOS shortages reflect these difficulties.

MOS	AUTH	ON HAND	%	SHORT	90 DAY LOSSES	ASI
26L20	32	23	72%	9	13	F5
31J20	27	16	59%	11	6	L5
31M20	30	23	76%	7	6	
31S30	9	1	11%	8	0	
32G20	6	4	66%	2	1	M2
63B20	14	7	50%	7	0	R4
71L20	7	3	43%	4	2	
72B10	14	1	7%	13	0	
72B20	138	109	79%	29	4	
72F40	24	15	63%	9	0	

(c) Recommendations: Additional emphasis should be placed on identification and assignment of personnel with ASI's and higher skill levels to positions requiring those particular skills. Additionally, personnel assignments and reassignments within the Brigade and USASTRATCOM should be done with attention to skill level and MOS rather than a total authorized/assigned picture.

(d) Command Action: Identification of space authorizations which require additional skills on specific equipment has been submitted in both BADS and TAADS submissions.

(2) Personnel Management, CONUS Assignment:

(a) Observations: Personnel assigned to this Agency are experiencing difficulty in obtaining assignments in CONUS when departing on DEROs.

(b) Evaluation: In overseas areas, Signal Corps personnel in many fixed station-type MOS's are primarily employed in communications operations. In CONUS, communications operations are generally leased or staffed by civilian personnel. Therefore, in order to perform in their MOS, personnel must seek Inter-Theater Transfers (ITT). As more specialized training is required for modern complex communications equipment, positions in certain MOS's are available only overseas, and the career NCO finds he is virtually tied to overseas assignments. This is a deterrent to many young married NCO's who might otherwise choose a military career.

(c) Recommendations: Recommend this problem be considered in light of the VOLAR efforts.

(d) Command Action: None.

b. Intelligence: None

c. Operations:

(1) Ground Problems at II Field Forces AUTOSEVOCOM:

(a) Observation: During the period November through December 1970 AUTOSEVOCOM could not provide satisfactory service to Headquarters, II Field Forces Vietnam, due to improper grounding at the Headquarters and lack of ground on the signal lines.

(b) Evaluation: It was determined after consultation with CSEMA 1st Signal Brigade, AUTOSEVOCOM, personnel from the 101st Radio Research Company and the Signal Officer II Field Forces that the best available ground would be an existing buried water pipe of approximately 200 to 300 feet in length at the rear of II Field Forces Headquarters. As a further measure to insure a complete ground, all AUTOSEVOCOM Equipment was furnished with an external three prong ground in January 1971. Since 4 January there has been only one outage of short duration which can be attributed to power. This outage was due to the failure of a line filter which had probably been damaged prior to the proper grounding of equipment and signal lines. Trouble calls and complaints regarding quality have decreased to where they compare favorably with other Long Binh Post subscribers. Further it has been noted that there has been a steady increase of equipment utilization by the subscribers at II Field Forces Headquarters since the grounding upgrade, due largely to higher quality service.

(c) Recommendations: None

(d) Command Action: Review of grounding procedures at all sites to insure proper grounding of equipment.

(2) Improvement of Long Binh - Site 96 - Tropospheric Scatter Communications Link:

(a) Observations: The Tropo Shot from Long Binh to Site 96, although not marginal, was not providing the quality of service desired.

(b) Evaluation: After a number of system engineering studies it was decided in late December by 1st Signal Brigade to install a passive relay on a mountain approximately halfway between the two sites, in order to improve the system. It should be noted that the planning range of the equipment used (TRC-129) is about 100 miles. The shot is approximately 154 miles. Page Corporation operated and maintained the Site 96 end and provided technical assistance at the Long Binh terminal. On 8 January a passive tropospheric scatter relay was installed at the mountain site, consisting of two antennas and a waveguide. During the testing period it was determined that there was no significant improvement in the system with the installation of the passive relay. On 18 February, after over one month of testing the passive reflector, it was decided by 160th Signal Group with the approval of higher headquarters to remove the equipment from the mountain top. Work commenced on the 20th and was completed on the 21st of February. Current efforts for upgrading the system consist of installation of newer antennas on both ends. At the end of the reporting period, work had not started on this project.

(c) Recommendations: None

(d) Command Action: None

(3) DSTE Installation at Russell Major Relay:

(a) Observation: Operators required some additional training in order to operate the DSTE:

(b) Evaluation: Personnel not familiar with the DSTE operation needed to be familiarized on the equipment. Operators did not understand fully the operation of the Common Control Unit which resulted in a high reject rate. Another contributing factor to the reject rate (of good tapes) was improper insertion of tapes in the tape reader. Further the DSTE does not have an alarm for TOP SECRET or SPECAT traffic to warn operators that such traffic is being received.

(c) Recommendations: Training classes on DSTE equipment should be a part of the overall installation/activation effort.

(d) Command Actions: Training Classes for all personnel in the AUTODIN section were conducted. Extremely close supervision was maintained by the section NCOIC and his superiors until satisfactory standards of performance were achieved.

(4) Inactivation of Telephone Operations Company:

(a) Observations: On 1 March 1971 Federal Electric Corporation assumed responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the Long Binh DTE and all outside plant, plus installation and repair of telephones on Long Binh Post. Additional missions assigned to the Telephone Operations Company such as operation and maintenance of the Tactical Dial Central Exchange (AN/TTC-28) and responsibility for the Emergency Action Console were transferred to Radio Company.

(b) Evaluation: As a further responsibility Radio Company was tasked with assisting the civilian contractor in installation and repair (I&R) on the Long Binh Post Complex telephone system. No personnel are authorized for the purpose except a small contingency element assigned to operate and maintain the AN/TTC-28 and the EAC. Due to personnel excesses created by the inactivation of the Telephone Operations Company a number of personnel are currently available and are being employed for this I&R element. Normal rotation plus tour curtailments will eliminate this excess in a few months. Tasking of Signal Support Agency Long Binh to assist the contractor is essential due to the fact that experience has shown that the contractor cannot, at this time, keep up with routine installation and repair work, nor is the contractor as responsive to emergency problems as the military. The contractor is not organized to respond rapidly to outages caused by lightning, etc. during other than normal duty hours. At present most contractor personnel reside in Saigon. Contractor personnel receive per diem since quarters are not available on Long Binh Post.

(c) Recommendations: Recommend that personnel for an Installation and Repair Element continue to be authorized to assist the contractor. As a further step consideration should be given to authorize contractor personnel billeting on Long Binh Post.

(d) Command Action: Continuous monitoring is being maintained on the status of available I&R personnel. Request for authorization of personnel slots have been submitted under BADS.

(5) Tertiary power for Agency Communications Sites.

(a) Observation: During severe weather conditions in the Long Binh Post Complex Area in the latter part of April 1971, Post power was lost for varying periods.

(b) Evaluation: 1st Signal Brigade Regulations require not only a back-up power service, but also a third power source. At present we can not fully comply with this requirement at the USARV Telecommunications Center where there is only a secondary power source. There is no authority for requisitioning tertiary power generation equipment although it is required by 1st Signal Brigade.

(c) Recommendation: Recommend that the requirement for a tertiary power source at USARV TCC be deleted or that authority be granted at higher headquarters for such an installation.

(d) Command Action: None

(6) Increase Responsibilities of the Electronics Maintenance Section:

(a) Observations: There has been a tremendous increase in the supply mission of the Electronics Maintenance Facility, brought on by the assumption of the support of all Signal PLL's for all units of the 160th Signal Group. Providing "ON the Job Training" in the field of carrier, teletype, radio, and micro-wave repair, as well as on site assistance to ARVN Forces has placed an additional burden on the facilities and technicians of the electronics maintenance facility.

(b) Evaluation: When the original plan was submitted for the Electronics Maintenance Facility to provide Signal PLL Support for units of the 160th Signal Group, it was indicated that it would be support of already established Signal PLL's. Since the original plan went into effect, several new units have been added to the 160th Signal Group. It has also been found that many of the PLL's to be supported were not established PLL's but were in fact new PLL's that were being established by units that had previously obtained supply support direct from an ASL operated by their Agency S-4. Because of this, the individual units had no demand data on repair parts used on systems that had been in operation for some time. These units have received very little detailed guidance in the proper procedures for establishment of a PLL. As a result, these units are considering nearly everything in their equipment parts manuals as mission essential and are requisitioning all these items to minimum stockage levels. The result is that the Electronics Maintenance Facility Supply Section is unable to properly process the PLL's being submitted or to provide the units being supported with timely follow-up service to the large amount of requisitions being submitted. In addition, the high cancellation rate of requisition by the depot complicates the problem. The training of ARVN repair personnel in the Electronics Maintenance Facility has presented no problems to date. The skill level of the students has been such that they have required very little individual help. In many cases the ARVN repairmen have been able to assist with the normal shop work load. The assisting of ARVN forces with on-site repair has caused a 50% increase in work load of the Carrier Section, which to date has caused no problems because of the assistance received by the ARVN Carrier repairmen in training.

(c) Recommendations: If the ASL Supply Support mission is to remain at somewhere near the present level, it is recommended that a separate DSU ASL Section be organized to operate directly under the Agency S-4. This section should be headed by a Supply Warrant (761A) if possible, or at least an E-7 (76U40) Supply Sergeant, and should have at least 5 additional military supply personnel as well as 2 local National supply clerks. The three personnel presently authorized in the Electronics Maintenance Facility TDA should set up and operate a Shop Supply and Shop Stock as a part of the Maintenance Shop. This Supply Section would then be another customer of the DSU ASL. If the on-site support and training of ARVN personnel is to be continued, it will be necessary for the Electronics Maintenance Facility to have all the personnel they are authorized. This is particularly true in those sections that must provide on-site support. Any increase in assistance beyond the present level would require additional personnel.

(d) Command Action: A review of the TDA is in progress to determine total requirements to be submitted with the next EADS TAADS submission.

d. Organization:

(1) Loss of space authorization prior to elimination of mission.

(a) Observation: As part of the overall cutback in strength in the Republic of Vietnam 30 spaces were deleted from the Area Communications Center Company (TDA W258AA) based on a proposed reduction in mission.

(b) Evaluation: The deletion of spaces was based on the proposed deactivation of the 1st Signal Brigade Communications Center and the 160th Signal Group Communications Center, which were operated by the Area Communications Center Company. The proposed phase-out did not take place until 12 March 1971. There were no space authorizations for operating the two communication centers for

the three months between deletion of spaces and closing of the facilities, thus placing a considerable burden on the personnel assets of the Agency

... (c) Recommendation: Recommend that closer coordination at Brigade level be maintained between all staff sections involved during proposed and actual phase-out of communications facilities. Continual liaison among all elements is imperative in order to prevent unnecessary personnel disruption.

(d) Command Action: None

(2) Transfer of UIC of Telephone Operations Company to Communications Assets Recovery Agency (CARA):

(a) Observation: Reference para 2c (4) above. A number of problems resulted from the UIC transfer which hindered proper completion of Company stand down.

(b) Evaluation: The Telephone Operations Company had to turn over much of its equipment to Federal Electric Corporation, and the company's property book then had to be closed out and audited. During this period CARA could not use the UIC for requisitioning supplies and equipment, and in reality did not have a property book. Similar problems were encountered in establishing a Unit Fund for CARA. Initially, steps were taken to close out the Telephone Operations Company Unit Fund preparatory to terminal audit. The time consuming process of requesting and receiving final bank statements from CONUS has left CARA without a Unit Fund for a lengthy period.

(c) Recommendation: Future inactivations and activations be completed as separate actions in accordance with applicable regulations.

(d) Command Action: None

e. Training: Transfer of mandatory training from Agency level to Company level:

(1) Observation: Due to the conditions imposed upon this unit by the necessity of 24 hour operation, it is difficult to schedule mandatory training for the entire Agency.

(2) Evaluation: The system developed of accomplishing mandatory training in formal classes was of questionable value. Time taken away from the individual's place of duty was lost time. The policy of requiring Company and Agency personnel to attend mandatory training during their off duty time after completion of 12 hour shifts was adversely affecting morale. A procedure was developed whereby as much of the mandatory training as possible was prepared in package form and distributed to each of the companies and their respective sections. It is the responsibility of the individual's section chief to insure the individual reads and initials the packet. Obviously certain training can not be so packaged, but by this method, time taken away from an individual's duty section is minimized. Department of the Army's efforts to eliminate unnecessary training and reduce the number of mandatory subjects has been of great assistance.

(3) Recommendations: Recommend continual review at all levels to determine realistic mission training/mandatory subject requirements.

(4) Command Action: Continuous review of the packet training program to insure that it is meeting its stated goals.

f. Logistics: Consolidation of supply effort:

(1) Observation: Prior to the end of October 1970 each Company maintained its own unit supply room, which performed normal supply functions as well as maintaining unit property records.

(2) Evaluation: Due to a critical shortage of trained and qualified supply personnel and the unnecessary duplication of effort by each of the companies, the Agency Commander directed the consolidation and collocation of all supply functions within the Agency under the direct control of the Agency S-4. This resulted in a more efficient use of personnel, elimination of duplication of effort, plus better distribution of limited assets. Vehicle usage has been reduced considerably, and better control measures for use of equipment etc. have been instituted. Consolidated supply action has proven very effective at the Agency level.

(3) Recommendation: Recommend that Consolidated Supply be considered as an organizational structure for development in the TAADS program.

(4) Command Action: None

g. Communications: None

h. Material: None

i. Other; Maintenance of Federal Electric Corporation vehicles:

(1) Observation: The original contract between Federal Electric Corporation and the delegated representatives of the Department of the Army contained no mention of a requirement for FEC to maintain their own vehicles. To alleviate this situation until such time as the contract could be renegotiated, 1st Signal Brigade tasked specific units to provide maintenance support to FEC.

(2) Evaluation: At the present time, Signal Support Agency Long Binh is maintaining approximately 27 vehicles for the contractor which includes PLL, TAMMS, organizational maintenance and preparation of vehicles for turn in to Support Maintenance Units. This maintenance support places a burden on the units tasked due to the fact that no personnel spaces are authorized for this special support.

(3) Recommendation: The contract should be modified to specify contractor responsibilities for operator maintenance (Preventive Maintenance). Increased efforts should be made to qualify contractor personnel as drivers of tactical vehicles prior to the contractor assuming responsibilities for such vehicles.

(4) Command Action: Support is being provided within the capabilities of this unit.

3. Headquarters Department of the Army Survey Information:

Not Applicable.

Melvin Fowler
MELVIN FOWLER
MAJ, SigC
Acting Commander

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